THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIR (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Question does not arise.

Paddy procurement by FCI in current season

510. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CON SUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of paddy procured by the Food Corporation of India so far during the current season;

(b) whether the procurement has been according to the target;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the amount of paddy lost due to failure of FCI to procure it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) The procurement of paddy under price support scheme is totally voluntary in nature, as only the paddy offered by farmers conforming to prescribed specifications are purchased by FCI/State agencies. Hence, no targets are fixed for procurement of paddy.

A quantity of 71.24 lakh tonnes of paddy has been procured by the publc procuring agencies for Central Pool upto 20.11.97 in the current Kharif Marketing Season 1997-98, which includes 29.37 lakh tonnes of paddy procured by FCI alone. During the last season, the quantity procured upto the same date, was 53.05 lakh tonnes

(d) Dos not arise.

Villages not covered by PDS in Uttar Pradesh

511. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CON SUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are villages in Uttar Pradesh which are not covered by PDS as on 15th November, 1997;

(b) if so, the numbers thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(e) the measures Government propose to take to bring them under PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Public Distribution System (PDS) is implemented under the joint responsibility of Central and State Governments. Central Government make available PDS commodities at Central Issue Prices to States/UTs. The operational responsibility for implementing the PDS rests with the State Governments/UT Administrations. Government of India do not maintain details of village-wise coverage under PDS.

Wheat import and low price for procured wheat to farmers

512. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of wheat imported during last one year including the details of countries and the quantity imported, country-wise;

(b) whether Government are aware that FCI has paid very nominal price to the farmers for the wheat so procured from them and sold the same at higher price in open market;

(c) wheather Government are also aware that wheat has been exported at less price than import price;

(d) if answers to parts (b) and (c) are in affirmative, whether any enquiry has been conducted; and

(e) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) The details of

wheat imported during 1996-97 and 1997-98 are given below:—

Year	Country	Quantity
1996-97	Australia	13.90
	Canada	2.66
	Argentina	0.95
	Total	17.51
1997-98	Australia	2.42

(b) Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat is fixed by the Government on the basis of recommendations made by the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) which takes into account the cost of cultivation and a reasonable margin of profit to the farmer. The MSP for wheat was raised by Rs. 35 per quintal for 1997-98 rabi marketing season. A Central bonus of Rs. 60 per quintal has also been allowed over and above the MSP of wheat payable to the farmers. The FCI procures wheat under the Price Support Scheme at the prices fixed by the Government. The farmers arc free to sell their produce to the FCI or other Government Agencies at the procurement prices fixed or sell it in the open market at higher prices. During 1996-97 FCI sold wheat in the open market at prices lower than the economic cost.

(c) There has not been any export of wheat during the last one year on Government accounts. Some quantity of wheat was exported during 1996-97 from the open market at prices ranging between US $160 to 192 per MT FOB. The prices of wheat imported during 1996-97 ranged between US $ 148 to 186 per MT FOB in respect of Australian wheat, US $ 152.50 per MT FOB in respect of Canda-dian wheat and US $ 173 per MT C&F in respect of Argentinian wheat, (d) and (e) Do not arise.

Substandard foodgrains supplied through PDS

513. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that very substandard quality foodgrains arc being supplied to the consumers through PDS in the country, particularly in Gujarat;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have conducted surprise checks on FCI godowns and Fair Price Shops to unearth the supply of substandard foodgrains to the consumers;

(d) if so, the details thereof for the last two years. State-wise and year-wise; and

(e) the steps Government propose to take to ensure good quality foodgrains supply to the consumers through PDS in the country particularly in Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Public Distribution System (PDS) is implemented under the joint responsibility of Central and State Governments. The operational responsibility for implementing the PDS rests with the State/UT Administrations. This Department has not received any major complaint about sub-standard quality of foodrains being distributed to consumers through PDS including Gujarat.

(b) Docs not arise.

(c) and (d) Surprise checks were conducted in the FCI godowns at Sabarmati and Mehsana during July, 97 and shortcomings observed in these godowns were communicated to FCI for taking remedial action.

(e) Following steps have been taken by the government to ensure good quality of foodgrains to consumer through PDS in the country.

(i) Only A&B category wheat and PDS stocks of rice conforming to PFA standards are issued for PDS.